REMARKS

In the Office Action dated March 23, 2007, the Examiner rejected claim 1-23 under 35 USC 103 as obvious over RFC791: Internet Protocol-DARPA Internet Program Protocol Specification (hereafter RFC791) and the "applicant's disclosure of prior art". To facilitate prosecution, independent claim 1 has been amended. Claims 12-23 have been canceled. Claims 24-35 are new. The new claims are not believed to introduce any new matter and are believed fully supported by the original claims, Figures 3-5 and associated description.

More specifically, independent claims 1, 24, and 29 recite generating a "first Extended Link Services (ELS) message including the first message fragment and a second ELS message including the second message fragment, wherein the first ELS message is associated with a first exchange and the second ELS message is associated with a second exchange" and sending the first and second message fragments, "wherein the second message fragment is sent after the first exchange is complete."

The Examiner argues that it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to implement RFC791 in order to fragment authentication messages in a switching fabric. The Applicants' Representative acknowledges that packet fragmentation is well known in particular contexts. However, it is respectfully submitted that the claim language as amended is not obvious in view of the cited art. The independent claims explicitly recite message fragments in ELS messages and separate exchanges for each message fragment. Although fragmentation is known in particular contexts, it is respectfully submitted that the claims do not merely refer to fragmentation. For example, fragmentation would simply transmit message fragments one after another. However, timeouts currently defined for ELS messages are not adequate for authentication protocols. Consequently, the techniques of the present invention contemplate sending message fragments as ELS messages in separate exchanges. For example, a first message fragment may be sent in a first exchange. A second message fragment is sent only after a first exchange is complete.

The material cited by the Examiner and known prior art cited by the Examiner does not teach any message fragments associated with different exchanges. For example, IP packet fragmentation does not associate fragments with different exchanges. By contrast, RFC 791 merely notes "In the routing of messages from one internet module to another, datagrams may need to traverse a network whose maximum packet size is smaller than the size of the datagram. To overcome this difficulty, a fragmentation mechanism is provided in the internet protocol." Furthermore, "The internet modules use fields in the internet header to fragment and reassemble internet datagrams when necessary for transmission through "small packet" networks." (Section 1.4 of RFC 791) RFC 791 nor any other cited reference or known art is not believed to teach or suggest any exchanges or transmitting a second fragment only after a first exchange is complete.

In light of the above remarks, the rejections to the independent claims are believed overcome for at least the reasons noted above. Applicants' Representative believes that all pending claims are allowable in their present form. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns for Applicants' Representative, the Examiner is encouraged to contact her at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,
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